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**General David H. Petraeus,
Commander, US Central Command
Press Briefing
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General Petraeus: I just met with [Janobi] President. We had a very good meeting again. This visit is part of a number of visits that I have made in recent months to the Central Asian states. It's very good to be back in Dushanbe and in your country.

With the President we began by discussing the situations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We discussed the increase in violence in Afghanistan over the course of the last two years. I explained the deployment of additional U.S. forces that has gone on in Afghanistan this year and explained the process that has been ongoing in Washington where President Obama and his principal advisors have been discussing the way ahead in Afghanistan and resources for Afghanistan. We agreed, of course, on the mutual interest in improving security in Afghanistan and in countering extremism and illegal narcotics in the entire region. I noted the determination of the United States and NATO and our coalition partners to assist whomever is elected on the 7th of November in Afghanistan as the new President of Afghanistan forms his government and seeks to serve the people of his country in the most effective way possible.

We also discussed the situation in Pakistan and how the government, the people, the clerics and the military have shown impressive determination over the past ten months to counter the extremists inside Pakistan who threaten the country's very existence. And I noted the impressive results and the sacrifice that Pakistan has made in the campaigns in Swat Valley and now in South Waziristan.

I expressed appreciation to the President for the support that Tajikistan has provided to the United States and other coalition partners. The overflight permissions, the ground transit from Kyrgyzstan through Tajikistan and the support to our French and

Spanish partners all have been very important elements of the so-called Northern Distribution Network that moves through most of the Central Asian states and helps our logistical resupply into Northern Afghanistan.

In fact with the increased support from Russia, and we discussed the President's recent visit, with that increased support and the support from most of the Central Asian states, some 4,000 containers have already moved down the Northern Distribution Network in less than the first year of its existence.

Finally, we discussed the areas in which we have been cooperating and partnering in counternarcotics operations, in helping Tajikistan upgrade its customs and border facilities, in working together in training special operations forces so that again, we can pursue together our mutual interests of countering extremism, combating illegal narcotics trafficking, and supporting economic development.

And in a few minutes I'll go off with our ambassador to meet with some of the members of the diplomatic community here in Dushanbe.

Question: The operations conducted by the coalition forces in Afghanistan in the east of Afghanistan result in the movement of the extremist forces to the northern borders with Tajikistan which creates a threat to Tajikistan itself. How about the number, to what extent are the presence of American troops increased in Afghanistan?

General Petraeus: First of all, let me just say that we are very sensitive to the movement of extremists in response to our operations. Again, one reason we have worked with all of the countries to the north of Afghanistan to help with their borders and customs and special operations forces is to ensure that they have the capability, if required, to combat extremists.

This year we have already increased our forces in Afghanistan from about 30,000 U.S. to about 65,000 right now. Our NATO and other coalition partners have also increased their forces probably about 6,000 or 7,000 now. And as you know, the NATO nations and the United States are discussing the possibility of the additional commitment of resources, of troops, of civilian advisors and money. And as I'm sure you know, the United States Congress recently passed an important law that will provide additional resources for the next five years to Pakistan as well.

Question: Could you say a little bit more in greater detail, a few words about the special forces that are going to conduct training with Tajik customs and border forces?

General Petraeus: We have had a program as I'm sure you know, again, of improving or in some cases constructing facilities. That includes the bridge, customs facilities, border force facilities and also of training efforts for different elements of your security services both to learn from them too, because they have done some very good operations in recent years, and to provide the lessons that we have learned in operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the world.

There also, as I'm sure you know, has been a series of exercises focusing on peacekeeping operations with various Central Asian States, and also disaster relief operations.

But now I don't want to be impolite and hold up the diplomatic community of Dushanbe, so with your thanks. Thank you all very much.

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